

CRS Report for Congress

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Arts in Education: Background and Legislation

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Summary

According to the Goals 2000 panel, the “arts” are considered part of the core curriculum for K-12 education. The federal program that supports integrating arts in the schools at the K-12 level is the Arts in Education program, authorized under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) as amended, and administered by the Department of Education (ED). This program provides grants for model projects that integrate the arts into school curricula. The program has, in the past, given two major grants: one to the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts and one to the Very Special Arts (now VSA ARTS) program for children with disabilities. P.L. 106-554 expanded funding to \$28 million for additional arts education grants in FY2001. In the 107th Congress, the Arts in Education program was considered under the No Child Left Behind Act (P.L. 107-110) as part of the reauthorization of the ESEA, and it remains a separate program under ESEA, Title V, Part D, Subpart 15. The FY2004 appropriation for the Arts in Education program was \$35.1 million. The Bush Administration’s FY2005 budget request was \$0 for Arts in Education under ED’s School Innovation and Improvement programs account. The House-passed FY2005 Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education and Related Agencies appropriations bill did not specify any funding for Arts in Education, whereas the FY2005 Senate-reported bill allocated \$40.5 million for Arts in Education. After a series of continuing resolutions, the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2005 (P.L. 108-447) provided \$35.9 million for Arts in Education. (This figures does not reflect the across-the-board 0.80% reduction enacted.) This report will be updated as legislative activity occurs.

Background. The Goals 2000: Educate America Act, P.L. 103-227, designated the **arts** (music, dance, theater and visual arts) as core subjects to be taught in the nation’s schools, grades K-12. In response to Goals 2000, voluntary national standards¹ were developed by a consortium of the National Arts Education Association and the National Committee for Standards in the Arts, under a joint grant from ED, the National

¹ See Music Educators National Conference, *National Standards for Arts Education: Education Reform, Standards, and the Arts* (1994).

Endowment for the Arts (NEA), and the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH). The purpose of these standards was to provide explicit detail about what American students should know and be able to do in the arts.

Within each grade-level cluster (K-4, 5-8, and 9-12) the standards are organized by arts discipline: dance, music, theater, and visual arts. Within each of the disciplines are the specific competencies considered essential for every student. Each standard has two components: content and achievement level. Standards specify the level of competency that students are expected to achieve in each of the arts at the completion of grades 4, 8, and 12. According to the Music Educators National Conference, 49 states and the District of Columbia have adopted some kind of state music education standards similar to but not necessarily identical to the national standards. Iowa has content and performance standards adopted at the local level, *not* at the state level. There was no requirement under Goals 2000 that states and localities must adopt the national standards.

The *Arts Report Card* released by the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP)² reports on the first national assessment of participation in and achievement levels in arts education programs in the schools. NAEP is a “nationally representative and continuing assessment of what America’s students know and can do in subject areas.”³ The NAEP arts assessment was conducted at grade 8. It looked at music, visual arts, and special samples for dance and theater. Most students attended schools in which instruction, following district or state curricula, was offered in the subjects of music and visual arts, but not in theater or dance. Seventy-two percent of the students attended schools that followed a district or state curriculum in music, and 64% attended schools that followed a district or state curriculum for visual arts. Only 15% of students attended schools with state curriculum for theater, and 10% attended schools with dance curriculum. NAEP’s assessment was designed independent of, and has no direct relation to, the National Standards for Arts Education. Achievement levels were measured based on NAEP’s assessment, which was specially designed for and very specific to arts components. For example, in the music “responding” category, 79% of students could identify Brahms’s “Lullaby” as being suitable for putting a child to sleep and justified their answer. In visual arts, 55% of students could identify which works of art in a sample were contemporary Western art. Female students consistently outperformed male students on “creating, performing, and responding” in the total arts assessment. Higher levels of parental education were associated with higher levels of student performance in the arts assessment (another such assessment is not scheduled until 2008).

A report published in 2002 by the National Center for Education Statistics, *Arts Education in Public Elementary and Secondary Schools, 1999-2000*, indicated that 94% of elementary schools had classroom instruction in music and that 87% of these schools had instruction in the visual arts. Seventy-seven percent of elementary schools sent students to arts performances (concerts, plays, etc.), and 65% of elementary schools provided trips to art galleries and museums. In secondary schools, 90% of these schools have music instruction and 93% have visual arts instruction.

² National Center for Education Statistics, *Arts Report Card: Eighth-Grade Findings from the National Assessment of Educational Progress* (Washington, 1999).

³ Ibid. NAEP is a congressionally mandated project of the National Center for Education Statistics at the U.S. Department of Education.

A study titled *Critical Links: Learning in the Arts and Student Academic and Social Development* (2002), published by the Arts Education Partnership, is a compendium of research from 62 studies. Some of the highlights of this research include the finding that certain forms of arts instruction enhance “basic reading comprehension, speaking and writing skills.” The study suggests that music instruction helps develop “spatial- temporal reasoning that is fundamental to understanding mathematical concepts.” It concludes that learning in the arts helps with problem solving and creative thinking; that it “nurtures motivation and educational aspirations”; and finally, that it promotes “student growth in self-confidence, self-control, self-identity, conflict resolution, collaboration, empathy, and social tolerance.”

The Arts in Education Program. The federal Arts in Education program administered by ED,⁴ complements arts education programs administered by the NEA.⁵ It authorizes national demonstration and federal leadership activities for school districts, state educational agencies, institutions of higher education, and state and local non profit arts organizations, primarily to help integrate the arts into school curriculum. Activities include the establishment of model arts education programs throughout the states, development of arts curricula, design of art assessments, and creation of model professional development programs in the arts for teachers and administrators.⁶

An earlier reauthorization of ESEA, the Improving America’s Schools Act of 1994 (P.L. 103-382) extended the Arts in Education program and added a new authority (Title X, ESEA, Part D, Subpart 2) for at-risk youth. The purpose of the Cultural Partnerships for At-Risk Children and Youth was to provide seed money through demonstration grants to local educational agencies in partnership with communities to improve cultural resources for at-risk children and youth. This program was funded in FY2003 and FY2004, allowing 19 continuation awards and \$4 million in FY2003, and 18 continuation awards and \$3,976,000 in FY2004. There is no mention in the FY2005 Conference Report (H.Rept. 108-792) of separate funding for the “youth at-risk” arts program in FY2005.

⁴ Other federal programs provide funding for arts education, including the National Endowment for the Arts and the Challenge America Arts Fund, but “Arts in Education” has been the only federal program singularly focused on arts education for K-12. Arts in Education was previously authorized under Title X (Programs of National Significance), Part D, Subpart 1 of ESEA. The No Child Left Behind Act, P.L. 107-110, maintained Arts in Education as a separate program, but placed it under Innovation and Improvement, the Fund for the Improvement of Education for funding authority.

⁵ NEA administers arts education programs through direct grants for programs with a national focus and through state arts agencies, and it now administers a new program Challenge America Arts fund, a program of matching grants for arts education, outreach and community arts activities for rural and underserved areas. See NEA, *FY2005 Interior Appropriations Request*.

⁶ In FY2002, the program provided \$8.65 million for VSA arts, \$6.0 million for Kennedy Center programs, \$1.95 million for professional development for music educators, \$2.0 million for media literacy, \$7.3 million for model arts programs, and \$4.1 million for Cultural Partnerships for At Risk Children and Youth. In FY2003, the program provided \$6.95 million for VSA arts, \$5.96 million for the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, \$8.87 million for model arts programs, \$6.41 million for professional development for arts education, \$4 million for cultural partnerships for at-risk youth, \$1.1 million for media literacy for prevention of violence, and \$500,000 for evaluations.

The appropriation for Arts in Education (\$33.8 million in FY2003, and \$35.1 million in FY2004, \$35.9 million in FY2005) has in the past generally funded two major awards: one to the **John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts** (\$5.96 million in FY2003, \$6.2 million in FY2004), and one to **VSA ARTS** (\$6.95 million in FY2003, \$7.2 million in FY2004). In addition to these awards, recent appropriations have funded model projects and programs with broad uses and purposes. The remaining arts in education funding for FY2004 included programs as follows: \$303,000 for program evaluations; \$1.5 million for youth violence prevention; \$3.976 million for cultural partnerships for at-risk youth; \$7.5 million for model professional development activities; and \$9.9 million for the Secretary of Education to make direct grants to school districts, state educational agencies, and other entities to support model arts projects.

John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts. The Arts in Education grant provides funding for several arts education programs at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts that annually serve an estimated 5 million people — students, teachers, and audiences. Arts in Education supports the Kennedy Center’s Alliance for Arts Education project, which is a national network of state arts education committees, operating in partnership with the Kennedy Center, and helping to integrate the arts into regular school curricula. In addition, Arts in Education funding helps to provide support for the Kennedy Center’s American College Theater Festival, which involves an estimated 28,000 students, 5,200 teachers who participate annually, and an audience of 628,000 people.⁷ The Kennedy Center helps to produce regional theater festivals as well as the national festival in Washington. The Arts in Education program also funds what is called *Imagination Celebration*, a performing arts festival conducted both at the Kennedy Center and in U.S. cities across the nation. Finally, there is a *Performing Arts Centers and Schools: Partners in Education* program, which brings together staff of regional arts centers and school systems to study model programs. An institute has been formed that fosters partnerships between schools and communities.⁸ Workshops focus on teaching the arts or teaching other subject areas through the arts.

VSA ARTS (Formerly Very Special Arts). Funding for the VSA ARTS program helps “to integrate the arts into the lives of the disabled.” VSA ARTS is an international nonprofit organization, founded in 1974 by Jean Kennedy Smith. The program was created as an affiliate of the John F. Kennedy Center and has established organizations in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and in 85 countries. Using the arts — creative writing, dance, drama, music, theater, visual arts — VSA ARTS’s goal is to help disabled students develop learning skills and become independent. VSA ARTS introduces art to children with disabilities through a range of programs in elementary and secondary schools, hospitals, and rehabilitation centers. It also supports national programs for physically or mentally challenged adults such as employment training through the arts to enhance skills. One program called *playwright discovery*, is a competition for one-act plays by disabled persons on disabilities themes. The *soloist*

⁷ Department of Education, *FY2005 Justifications of Appropriations Estimates to the Congress*, 2004, vol. 1, pp. E92-E96.

⁸ A study by the President’s Committee on the Arts and the Humanities titled *Gaining the Arts Advantage* examines what makes a successful arts education program. A study of 91 school districts indicated that the first “critical factor in sustaining arts education” is the active involvement of the community that values the arts.

program for musicians with disabilities culminates in a Kennedy Center recital.⁹ VSA ARTS helps visual artists with disabilities by representing them and showing their work in VSA galleries. VSA ARTS has become an advocate for artists with disabilities, monitoring compliance of institutions, galleries, and related organizations with the Americans with Disabilities Act and other relevant statutes. There were approximately 4,353,000 students participating during FY2004 in the VSA ARTS state-initiated and national programs and festivals.¹⁰ According to VSA, one third of the children with autism who participated in a VSA music program “showed improved social, verbal, and listening skills.”¹¹

Legislative Activity

P.L. 107-110 (H.R. 1), No Child Left Behind Act. In the 107th Congress, provisions to extend and amend authority for the Arts in Education program were included in H.R. 1, the ESEA reauthorization, signed into law on January 8, 2002 as the No Child Left Behind Act, P.L. 107-110. H.R. 1 provided a separate program for Arts in Education (Title V-D, Subpart 15) and includes within its “purposes” “support of the national effort for students to demonstrate competence in the arts.” Funds are authorized for state educational agencies (SEAs), local educational agencies (LEAs), institutions of higher education, museums, other cultural institutions, public agencies, and private organizations for research on arts education; dissemination of information about model school-based arts education programs; development of curricular framework for arts education; in-service professional development; and model projects in the arts, including those established by the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts and VSA ARTS. If the appropriation is \$15 million or less for Arts in Education, then the VSA ARTS program and the Kennedy Center arts education programs are the only programs to be given funding priority. The actual funding authorization is tied to ED’s Fund for the Improvement of Education (FIE), Title V, Part D, with a **total** authorization level of \$625 million for FY2005 to fund multiple programs and activities under Title V, Part D, ESEA.

FY2005 Budget and Appropriations. The President’s FY2005 Budget Request proposed no funding for the Arts in Education program because of the Administration’s attempt to concentrate on “high-priority programs” by eliminating funding for smaller categorical programs that have, in their view, a “narrow or limited effect” in favor of broad state grant programs. The FY2005 budget sought to eliminate funding for this and other programs under FIE through which funding stream the Arts in Education program receives its funding. The FY2004 Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education appropriation provided \$35.1 million for Arts in Education. The House measure for FY2005 had no separate funding for Arts in Education, whereas the Senate-reported bill would have provided \$40.5 million. After a series of continuing resolutions, the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2005 (P.L. 108-447) provided \$35.9 million for Arts in Education including \$6.42 million for the Kennedy Center, \$7.5 million for VSA Arts,

⁹ Steve Hendrix and Cameron Davidson, “Accept No Limitations [...]” *American Way*, Apr. 1998.

¹⁰ Department of Education, *FY2005 Justifications of Appropriations Estimates to the Congress*, 2004, vol. 1, pp. E92-E96.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. E96.

\$13.5 million for a competitive model grants program, \$8 million for professional development for music, dance, theater, and visual arts, and \$500,000 for evaluations. The table below summarizes Arts in Education funding from FY1991 to FY2005.

Arts in Education Program Funding, FY1991-FY2005

Fiscal year	Appropriation
1991	\$4,392,000
1992 ^a	8,600,000
1993	6,944,000
1994	8,944,000
1995	10,500,000
1996	9,000,000
1997	9,000,000
1998	10,500,000
1999	10,500,000
2000	11,500,000
2001	28,000,000
2002 ^b	30,000,000 ^c
2003	33,779,000
2004	35,071,000
2005 budget request	0 ^d
2005 House-passed	0
2005 Senate-reported	40,500,000
2005 appropriation	\$35,920,000 ^e

- a. A one-time increase was provided in FY1992 to allow switch funding cycles to July 1 instead of Oct. 1.
- b. The Arts in Education program is now authorized under Innovation and Improvement Programs (SEA, Title V, Part D, Subpart 15).
- c. A one-time appropriation of \$1.65 million was provided for the VSA Arts festival.
- d. The President's FY2005 budget request sought to eliminate funding in FY2005 for some of the programs (including Arts in Education) under ESEA, Title V, Part D.
- e. An 0.80% reduction as enacted has not been applied to this figure.